

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:-

1. A photofinishing system comprising a support structure, a processor and a printer mounted to the support structure, a cartridge containing a roll of print media arranged in use to be mounted removably to the support structure, print media feed means located in the cartridge, and drive means mounted to the support structure and arranged to couple with the print media feed means, when the cartridge is mounted to the support structure, and to effect feeding of the print media through the printer, the processor being arranged to generate a printer drive signal that is representative of a photographic image, and the printer being coupled to the processor and arranged to process the drive signal and effect printing of the photographic image on the print media as the print media is fed through the printer from the cartridge.
2. A photofinishing system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the processor comprises a digital processor which is arranged to receive digitised data that is representative of a photographic image and to process the data in a manner to generate a printer drive signal that is representative of the photographic image, and the printer is arranged to process the drive signal and effect page-width printing of the photographic image on the print media as it is fed directly to the printer from the roll.
3. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the cartridge is arranged to be mounted removably in juxtaposition to the printer.
4. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein at least one printing fluid is provided for the printer by way of at least one replaceable printing fluid cartridge.

5. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein at least one refillable secondary cartridge carried by the cartridge, the secondary cartridge containing printing ink to be delivered to the printer.

6. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 5 wherein the roll of print media is removably mounted to a tubular core of the cartridge and wherein the at least one secondary cartridge is removably located within the tubular core.

7. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the digital processor is arranged to receive said digitised data from an input source selected from a scanning device, a computer disk, a digital camera output, a digital camera memory card, a digital file and an internet connection.

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8. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein said digitised data is input to the digital processor as a standardised image compression signal and processed as JPEG files.

9. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the printer comprises at least one print head assembly.

10. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 9 wherein the printer comprises two confronting, spaced-apart print head assemblies.

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11. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 10 wherein the print head assemblies are arranged selectively to direct printing fluid onto at least one face of print media from the roll of print media.

12. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 10 wherein each print head assembly comprises at least one print head module, each of which comprises a unitary arrangement of:

a) a support member,

b) at least four micro-electromechanical integrated circuit print head chips, each of which has a plurality of nozzles to and from which the printing fluid is delivered,

5 c) a fluid distribution arrangement mounting each of the print head chips to the support member, and

d) a connector for connecting electrical power and signals to each of the print head chips.

10 13. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the at least one print head module is removably located in a channel portion of a casing and wherein the casing contains electrical circuitry for controlling delivery of electrical power and drive signals to the print head chips by way of the connector.

15 14. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 1 and further comprising a drier means located in series with the printer, the drier means being arranged to receive printed media directly from the printer and comprising:

20 a) guide rollers for transporting the print media through the drier means, and

b) at least one blower arranged to direct drying air onto at least one face of print media as it is transported through the dryer means.

25 15. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 1 and further comprising a slitter means located in series with the printer, the slitter means being arranged to receive printed media following its passage through the printer, to transport the printed media in a longitudinal direction away from the printer and to slit the printed media In the longitudinal direction of transportation of the printed media.

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16. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 15 wherein the slitter means comprises:

a) guide rollers for transporting the print media through the slitter means,

b) spaced-apart slitting blades mounted on rotatable shafts, and

5 c) a rotatable, selectively positional turret supporting the rotatable shafts.

17. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 15 and further including a guillotine mounted to the slitter means, the guillotine being selectively actuatable to cut the print media at selected intervals.

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18. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the processor and the printer are mounted to a support structure and wherein the cartridge containing a replaceable said roll of the print media is removable mounted to the support structure.

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19. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 18 wherein the support structure includes a compartment and the cartridge is removably located in the compartment.

20 20. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 19 wherein a paper feed drive mechanism is mounted to the compartment and is arranged to engage a said roll of the print media.

21. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 20 wherein a
25 door is provided in a wall portion of the cartridge and wherein the door is arranged to be opened to enable the paper feed drive mechanism to engage the roll of print media.

22. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 21 wherein the
30 paper feed drive mechanism comprises a pivotal carrier, a first drive motor arranged to impart pivotal drive to the carrier, a primary drive roller mounted to the carrier and arranged to engage the roll of print media when

the door in the cartridge is open, and a second drive motor arranged to impart rotary drive to the primary roller.

23 A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the
5 print media feed means include a drive roller and a pinch roller, and
wherein the drive means comprises a third drive motor which is mounted
to the support structure.

24. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 13 wherein the
10 print head assembly is arranged to effect printing of the print media with a
feed rate up to 2 metres per second.

25. A digital photofinishing system as claimed in claim 24 wherein the
print head assembly has a width within the range 150 to 1250 mm and
15 print head chips numbering between 8 and 64.